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CURRENT PRACTICES IN REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS
IN IOWA SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Floyd D. Sanders
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by

Floyd D. Sanders

Approved by Committee:

Harold C. Friedman
Chairman

Ed. J. Confield
Dean of the Graduate Division

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Schools report on the progress of students in one or more ways. Report cards are known to be one of the most traditional and most commonly used reporting practices. Newer reporting procedures include such methods as parent-teacher conferences, progress report letters, and unsatisfactory work slips. Schools from time to time introduce new methods of reporting progress. The frequency of reporting progress to parents and students is known to be changing in some schools. In order to find out just what methods of reporting have been introduced in recent years and how extensively schools are making use of these methods, it is necessary that surveys be made periodically.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to find out what methods are being used for reporting student progress in secondary schools, the number of schools using each method, and the frequency with which each method was used. Principals' opinions regarding the degree to which each reporting practice was meeting each school's desired objectives was also included. The above information was compiled for use by administrators in order that they would

have current data to study, analyze, and incorporate into their school's reporting procedures if they so desired.

Importance of the study. Each school system, judiciously or not, has devised methods of reporting pupil progress. There have been much discussion and debate as to what comprises a good progress reporting program. By presenting survey results and opinions of specialists on the subject, it is anticipated that administrators will be better informed and may more readily develop an improved reporting program.

According to Hosier and Wagner, any reporting system which clearly informs parents of their children's progress and results in better school work is a good one and should be supported.¹ Camp, on the other hand, stated that reporting techniques that are used will never be completely effective. He also expressed the belief that what serves well today may be inadequate tomorrow. In order to improve the methods now in use, Camp suggested that teachers, parents, and pupils analyze the present reporting system in a logical manner, co-operatively seek solutions to any problems, and maintain many lines of intercommunication.²

¹M. M. Hosier and G. W. Wagner, "Promising Practices in Reporting Pupil Progress," Midland Schools, LXXV (September, 1960), 33.

²William Alexander, Louie T. Camp, quoted in "Special Feature on Reporting," National Education Journal, XLV (December, 1959), 26.

Delman and Michael suggested that educators continue to try new methods of reporting and, by continued evaluation, improve what they have and weed out the ineffective.¹

The need for research in connection with reporting procedures is evident. According to Alexander, more systematic publication of relevant research findings of results of experimentation with different reporting procedures, and of surveys of practices by local, state, and national educational agencies might help to bring about the understanding and spread of good reporting practices.²

II. LIMITATIONS

The conclusions of this study have certain limitations due to the sampling and the amount of the material covered by the questionnaire used to gather the data.

Responses were received from 230 principals of Iowa high schools in the spring of 1964. This was 49.4 per cent of the total number of high school districts in Iowa. The investigator believed that the number contacted would be large enough to be representative of the reporting procedures

¹H. Delman and K. E. Michael, "What are Some New Trends in Reporting Student Growth and Achievement to Parents?" National Association of School Principals' Bulletin, XLIV (April, 1960), 147.

²Alexander, op. cit., 18.

currently being used in Iowa high schools. The questionnaire used in the survey in connection with this research was limited to the following areas:

1. Types of methods used in reporting progress.
2. Procedures used in distributing progress reports.
3. Types of grading systems used in academic subjects.
4. Factors evaluated other than subject matter.
5. Types of grading systems used in areas other than subject matter.
6. Frequency of reporting progress.
7. How nearly each reporting practice that is used meets the school's desired objectives.

III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In 1947 Martin made a study of reporting practices in Iowa high schools. The study was concerned solely with report cards. The results indicated that it was doubtful whether a method or practice or form could be set up as a model to fit all situations. Martin stated in his conclusions that some educators thought it best to have no grades at all, some wanted a very simple type of progress report, and some preferred to expand the report so that it gave the whole story of the student in relation to the learn-

ing process.¹ Apparently no other method of reporting student progress was used widely in the secondary schools of Iowa at the time of the 1947 survey. Martin did indicate, however, that conferences were held in some schools as the need arose.

In choosing a good reporting system, one that will meet the objectives set forth by the school, a variety of factors need to be considered. Concerning one of these factors, Suehr wrote:

Probably the most important factor influencing the thinking of high school teachers concerning marking and reporting practices is the concept of the basic reason for maintaining high schools. The purpose of a high school education has gradually changed from that of selecting the few to prepare for college to that of preparing all youth for effective citizenship. In recent years there has also been a great increase in scientific knowledge of individual differences in abilities, interests, and personality, as well as a better understanding of the process of learning and a better understanding of mental hygiene. These developments have influenced marking and reporting practices.²

Some authorities believe that the purpose of the reporting system is a major factor to be considered in connection with the objectives set forth by the school.

According to Alexander, there seem to be two clear-

¹Louis J. Martin, "A Study of the Practices Used in Reporting Student Progress in Iowa High Schools During the School Year 1946-47" (unpublished Master's field report, Drake University, Des Moines, 1947), p. 22.

²J. H. Suehr, "Marking and Reporting Practice in a Modern High School" National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, XLVI (April, 1962), 29.

cut and justifiable purposes of reporting systems:

1. Parents should have information about their children's progress and standing in school. The information needs to be sufficiently factual, even if disappointing, so that the mother and father can use it to understand and help their child. Certainly such information at the high-school level should also be available to college-admission officials and prospective employers.
2. Ultimately, it is even more important that boys and girls have the best information available in understandable form about their own progress. To understand themselves, to capitalize on their strong points, and to remedy, if possible, their weaker ones, they need to know what these strengths and weaknesses are. Many types of evaluative data are needed for this purpose in addition to a six-or-twelve weeks' set of marks, but the accumulation and summary of facts at reporting time may be very useful in the pupil's own plan for continued, improved progress.¹

Schwartz and Tiedeman indicated that there are at least six major purposes that can be served by a satisfactory reporting system:

1. Reports provide for a periodic and systematic review of student growth.
2. Reports inform parents of the progress that their children are making in the schools.
3. Reports provide students with information about their progress in the schools.
4. Reports are used to secure information for administrative purposes.
5. Reports are used to collect information for guidance purposes.
6. Reports are used to provide information for promotional purposes.²

¹Alexander, op. cit., 16.

²Alfred Schwartz and Stuart C. Tiedeman, Evaluating Student Progress in the Secondary School, (New York: Longmans, 1957), p. 388.

Research studies have been made to discover what parents believed were important considerations in reporting academic progress of their children. The authors of these projects considered the results significant in determining some of the objectives of the reporting procedure. One Eastern high school conducted such a study and came up with the following common questions that parents would like answered about their child's progress and development:

1. In comparison with his group, how well is my child mastering subject matter?
2. Considering his over-all ability and potential, is my child working up to that level?
3. What strengths and weaknesses does my child evidence in his class work?
4. How is my child progressing in social development, such as citizenship, conduct, attitudes, etc?¹

Some schools have made some changes in their reporting procedures during the past few years while others have not made any. One study revealed that fifty-two per cent of the schools had revised their reporting system in the past five years. About half of the school systems that made the change found it desirable to ask parents to help in the revisions.²

Report cards have not been recognized as the sole effective means of indicating academic progress in recent years. Whigham found that recognition of the ineffective-

¹Camp, op. cit., 26.

²"Report on Reports" National Education Journal, LII (December, 1963), 14.

ness of single indicators of educational progress has led some schools to use such reporting means as checklists, narrative reports, and parent-teacher conferences. According to Whigham, other schools have added to the usual report card a variety of modifications such as lengthy explanations of grading symbols and space for parents to write replies. Whigham also stated that where progress reporting is complicated by the fact that secondary teachers have over a hundred pupils, parent conferences with school counselors and groups of teachers have become part of the reporting process.¹

In summary, it may be noted that any contemplated changes in the reporting program need to be analyzed in relationship to each school's objectives.

IV. PROCEDURE

For the purposes of this study, Story County was considered the center of the state. The state was then divided into four sections: northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast. This procedure was used to help insure that all portions of the state would be canvassed.

A preliminary questionnaire was then prepared and approved. For validation, a copy of the questionnaire was sent out to five high school principals in each section

¹E. L. Whigham, "What Should Report Cards Report?" School Executive, LXXXVII (May, 1958), 23.

of the state; the principals represented various sized schools.

The preliminary questionnaire was designed to obtain information concerning each school's reporting practices. Information requested covered the following areas: types of methods used in reporting student progress, forms of report cards, methods used to indicate progress on report cards, factors covered on report cards, methods used in distributing D and F slips, types of progress report letters sent to parents, methods used in sending progress report letters to parents and purposes of parent-teacher conferences. Also included in the questionnaire was a section requesting principals' opinions regarding the degree to which their reporting practices were meeting their school's objectives.

As a result of examining the results of the preliminary questionnaire, and referring to literature on the subject of progress reporting, a revised questionnaire was developed.

The revised questionnaire was sent to 248 high school principals, requesting information similar to that which was requested on the preliminary questionnaire.

In order to have a sufficient cross section of Iowa high schools represented in the results of the survey, schools were divided into six classifications in each of the four sections of the state. Questionnaires were sent to a proportionate number of schools in each classification in relation to the total number of schools in the state listed

in the respective classification. All classifications were based on the number enrolled in high school. The following is a breakdown of the number of students included in each classification: (1) 1 to 99; (2) 100 to 199; (3) 200 to 299; (4) 300 to 399; (5) 400 to 599; (6) 600 and above.

A letter of introduction explaining the reason for obtaining the information was enclosed with each questionnaire along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope in which to return the completed questionnaire. The letter, questionnaire, and self-addressed, stamped envelope were mailed to principals shortly after April 11, 1964. Within four weeks 215 questionnaires had been returned.

On May 5, 1964, a follow-up letter and questionnaire were sent to those who had not yet returned the questionnaire. Fifteen additional questionnaires were returned as a result of the follow-up letter.

In the following chapter a tabulation and interpretation of the responses will be presented.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION OF DATA

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the data obtained from the principals sampled. This discussion of the materials follows the same sequence as that of the questions asked on the questionnaire.

The data were obtained from 230 principals from all sections of the state of Iowa. Of the 248 principals who were sent the questionnaire, eighteen did not return a completed questionnaire. The rate of return was 92.7 per cent.

I. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Student progress reporting in high schools. Table I shows that there was a wide variety of reporting practices used in the state of Iowa. One-hundred per cent of the 230 principals who reported indicated that they made use of report cards in reporting progress. The next most widely used progress reporting method was parent-teacher conferences, which was used by 74.3 per cent of the schools. Twelve different reporting practices were listed. Of the twelve, telephone conversations and self-evaluations ranked lowest in frequency. Only 0.8 of one per cent of the respondents indicated that they made use of either of these practices.

TABLE I
PRACTICES USED IN REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS AS REPORTED BY
230 IOWA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1964

Practice Used	Number	Per Cent
Report cards	230	100.0
Parent-teacher conferences	162	74.3
F slips	116	50.4
D slips	107	46.5
Parent-counselor conferences	71	30.9
Progress report letters	46	20.0
Progress report forms	44	19.1
Checklists	28	12.2
Unsatisfactory work slips	11	4.8
Narrative reports	10	4.3
Telephone conversations	2	0.8
Self-evaluations	2	0.8

Designing of the report card. According to Table II, 58.3 per cent of the schools relied on local school personnel to design their report cards. Automation was used in a few of the schools that reported. One and three-tenths per cent of the respondents indicated that report cards in their school district were produced and processed by International Business Machines.

TABLE II
METHODS USED IN DESIGNING REPORT CARDS AS REPORTED
BY 230 IOWA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1964

Method	Number	Per Cent
By local school district or school staff	134	58.3
By publishing company	89	38.7
Partly by local school district or school staff and partly by publishing company	4	1.7
By International Business Machines	3	1.3

Methods used in distributing report cards. Table III shows that among the various methods used to distribute report cards, the most widely used procedure was to have the teacher hand out the cards to the students. Sixty-six and five-tenths per cent of the principals reported that the high school teachers in their district always used this method to distribute report cards. Another 12.6 per cent of the respondents indicated that their teachers distributed cards to students part of the time and the rest of the time gave them to parents when they came in for a parent-teacher conference. Still another 7.5 per cent of the schools had the teachers distribute the cards to the students except at the end of the year when they were mailed to the parents.

TABLE III

METHODS USED IN DISTRIBUTING REPORT CARDS REPORTED
BY 230 IOWA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1964

Method	Number	Per Cent
Teachers give to students	153	66.5
Teachers sometimes give to students and sometimes to parents	29	12.6
Teachers give to students except at end of year when they are mailed	17	7.5
Teachers sometimes give to students, sometimes to parents, and sometimes mail	9	4.0
Teachers sometimes give to students and sometimes mail to parents	5	2.2
Teachers mail to parents	4	1.7
Teachers sometimes give to parents and sometimes mail to parents	4	1.7
Teachers give to parents	2	0.9
Home room teachers give to students	2	0.9
Counselor gives to parents	1	0.4
Advisor gives to parents	1	0.4
Counselor sometimes gives to students and sometimes to parents	1	0.4
Teachers give to parents except at end of year when bus drivers give them to students	1	0.4
No procedure indicated	1	0.4

Grading systems used in academic subjects. The academic grading systems used in each of the responding schools is illustrated in Table IV. Eighty-six and five-tenths per cent of the schools recorded a grade of A, B, C, D, or F. Another 1.3 per cent of the schools used the same grading system but used a percentage score at the end of the year. The next most common grading systems were found to be A, B, C, D, E and A, B, C, D, E, F. Each of these systems were used by only 4.4 per cent of the schools, however.

TABLE IV

GRADING SYSTEMS USED IN RECORDING ACADEMIC GRADES ON REPORT CARDS REPORTED BY 230 IOWA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1964

System	Number	Per Cent
A, B, C, D, F	199	86.5
A, B, C, D, E	10	4.4
A, B, C, D, E, F	10	4.4
Percentage scores	5	2.2
A, B, C, D, F (Final grades listed as percentages)	3	1.3
A, B, C, D, D-, F	1	0.4
A, B, C, D, U	1	0.4
1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1	0.4

In addition to indicating what academic grading system was used in his school system, each principal was asked to indicate whether or not the number of students receiving each grade or score was reported on the card. The data collected are tabulated as follows:

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Schools not listing number of students receiving each grade or score	211	91.7
School listing number of students receiving each grade or score	19	8.3

Factors covered other than academic grades. Table V shows that the most common factor other than academic grades included on report cards was the attendance record. Eighty-five and two-tenths per cent of the schools reported that this factor was recorded on their report cards. Citizenship ranked second in frequency, with 49.1 per cent of the schools evaluating this factor.

There were twenty-four other factors reported as being evaluated by only one school each.

The grading systems used by the schools in reporting progress in areas other than subject matter are shown in Table VI. Two systems stand out as being widely used. S, I, U, was used by 30.9 per cent of the 165 schools which evaluated factors other than subject matter, whereas 30 per cent of these schools recorded a grade of A, B, C, D, or F.

TABLE V

FACTORS OTHER THAN SUBJECT MATTER EVALUATED ON REPORT CARDS
AS REPORTED BY 230 IOWA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1964

Factor	Number	Per Cent
Attendance	196	85.2
Citizenship	113	49.1
Effort	103	44.8
Attitude	82	35.7
Cooperation	75	32.6
Initiative	58	25.2
Interest	47	20.4
Conduct	10	4.3
Work habits	9	3.9
Tardiness	7	3.0
Class participation	4	1.7
Courtesy	3	1.3
Current number of credits	3	1.3
Dependability	2	0.9
Make-up work	2	0.9
Attention to directions	2	0.9
Oral and written ability	2	0.9
Personal appearance	1	0.4
Health	1	0.4
Working to full capacity	1	0.4
Good use of available time	1	0.4
Compliance with school policies	1	0.4
Appearance of needing more rest	1	0.4
Deportment	1	0.4
Self-reliance	1	0.4
Social attitude	1	0.4
Carelessness	1	0.4
Home study	1	0.4
Completeness of assignments	1	0.4
Use of correct grammar	1	0.4
Spelling ability	1	0.4
Social habits	1	0.4
Health and safety habits	1	0.4
Conformity to school rules	1	0.4
Respect for rights of others	1	0.4
Respect for school properties and policies	1	0.4
Acceptance of responsibilities	1	0.4
Class preparation	1	0.4
Promptness and accuracy	1	0.4
Personal cleanliness and neatness habits	1	0.4
Study habits	1	0.4
Willingness to seek necessary help outside of class	1	0.4

TABLE VI

GRADING SYSTEMS USED IN 1964 BY 165 IOWA SECONDARY SCHOOLS
THAT EVALUATED PROGRESS IN AREAS
OTHER THAN SUBJECT MATTER*

Grading System	Number	Per Cent
S, I, U	51	30.9
A, B, C, D, F	50	30.0
1, 2, 3, 4, 5	17	10.3
Checklists	13	7.9
S, U	9	5.4
A, B, C, D, E	5	3.0
1, 2, 3	4	2.4
Number of teachers giving unsatisfactory marks	2	1.2
1, 2, 3, 4	2	1.2
+ (outstanding), no mark (satis- factory, 0 (unsatisfactory)	2	1.2
A, B, C	1	0.6
A, B, C, D, E, F, I	1	0.6
S, I, U, N	1	0.6
Percentage scores	1	0.6
P (passing), U (unsatisfactory)	1	0.6
Good, satisfactory, poor	1	0.6
Excellent, fair, poor	1	0.6

TABLE VI (continued)

Grading System	Number	Per Cent
X, Y, Z (instead of S, I, U)	1	0.6
+ (outstanding), no mark (satisfactory), - (unsatisfactory)	1	0.6
+ (outstanding), no mark (satisfactory), u (unsatisfactory)	1	0.6

*65 of the 230 reporting schools did not evaluate progress in areas other than subject matter.

The only other grading system reported by more than ten per cent of the responding schools was the use of numerical symbols, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, on the report cards.

Provisions for comments. Table VII points out the fact that over one-half (53.9 per cent) of the schools involved in the current research did not allow space on report cards for teacher or parent comments. Space was provided for parent comments only in 2.2 per cent of the schools.

Frequency of distributing report cards. The majority of high schools indicated that they distributed report cards every nine weeks. Only 19.1 per cent of the schools reported that they distributed report cards every six weeks. No other type of distribution cycle was used by the schools in the current research.

TABLE VII

PROVISION MADE FOR COMMENTS ON REPORT CARDS REPORTED
BY 230 IOWA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1964

Provision	Number	Per Cent
No space provided for comments	124	53.9
Space for teacher comments only	76	33.0
Space for teacher and parent comments	25	10.9
Space for parent comments only	5	2.2

Frequency of issuing deficiency slips. Of the 125 schools making use of D-slips, F-slips, or unsatisfactory work slips, 74.4 per cent indicated that they issued them only midway between report card distribution periods. Table VIII illustrates the variations in the frequencies used in issuing deficiency slips.

Information included on progress reports and letters. Table IX shows the types of information included on progress report forms and progress report letters. Seventy-two and seven-tenths per cent of the schools that made use of these reporting practices indicated that they included information concerning low grades on them. Evaluations of the attitudes of students were made by 58.4 per cent of the schools making

TABLE VIII
 FREQUENCY OF ISSUING DEFICIENCY SLIPS REPORTED
 BY 125 IOWA SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN 1964*

Frequency	Number	Per Cent
Midway between report card distributions only	93	74.4
Whenever needed or considered desirable	15	12.0
Weekly	4	3.2
End of each six weeks	4	3.2
End of each three weeks	3	2.4
Midway between report card distributions and whenever needed or desired	3	2.4
Midway in first and third grading periods	1	0.8
Midway between report card distribution periods and every 2 weeks for any student failing more than one subject	1	0.8
Two weeks before the time report cards are to be distributed	1	0.8

*105 of the 230 reporting schools did not issue deficiency slips.

use of these forms and letters whereas effort was rated by 57.1 per cent of the responding schools. One of the schools indicated that it tried to evaluate and report the whole scope of student behavior and attitudes.

TABLE IX

INFORMATION INCLUDED ON PROGRESS REPORT FORMS AND
 PROGRESS REPORT LETTERS REPORTED BY
 77 IOWA SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1964*

Information	Number	Per Cent
Low grade reports	56	72.7
Attitude	45	58.4
Effort	44	57.1
Cooperation	33	42.9
Interest	32	41.6
Initiative	32	41.6
Dependability	23	29.9
Resourcefulness	16	20.8
All grade reports	13	16.9
Work habits	4	5.2
Poor discipline	3	3.9
Listening habits	2	2.6
Attendance	2	2.6
Failure warning notices	2	2.6
Notification of being on the honor roll	2	2.6
Teacher request for a conference with a parent	1	1.3
Whole scope of behavior and attitude-- as far as feasible	1	1.3
Suspicion of inadequate rest	1	1.3
Classroom participation	1	1.3
Improvement since previous report	1	1.3
Use of time in study hall	1	1.3
Failure to hand in assignments	1	1.3
Insufficient number of credits to date	1	1.3
Necessity for additional help	1	1.3
Low test scores	1	1.3
No response	4	5.2

*153 of the 230 reporting schools did not send progress report forms or progress report letters to parents.

Frequency of issuing progress reports and letters.

Table X shows the frequency with which progress reports and letters were distributed by the schools in which they were used. Fifty-one and nine-tenths per cent indicated they

TABLE X
 FREQUENCY OF ISSUING PROGRESS REPORT FORMS AND
 PROGRESS REPORT LETTERS REPORTED BY
 81 IOWA SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1964*

Frequency	Number	Per Cent
Midterm only	42	51.9
Whenever necessary or considered desirable	20	24.7
Every 3 weeks	4	5.0
Every 5 weeks	3	3.7
Midterm and whenever necessary or considered desirable	2	2.5
Every Monday	2	2.5
End of year to those short credits	1	1.2
Weekly	1	1.2
Third and sixth week of a quarter unless needed sooner	1	1.2
Upon parental request	1	1.2
Midterm of second and third quarters	1	1.2
End of nine weeks for A work; every six weeks for low grades	1	1.2
Prior to the end of nine week periods	1	1.2
End of 5th, 7th, 14th and 16th weeks	1	1.2

*148 of the 230 reporting schools did not issue progress report forms or progress report letters.

issued them at midterm only. The next most widespread practice was to issue progress report forms and progress report letters whenever it was deemed necessary or desirable. This practice was followed by twenty-four and seven tenths per cent of the responding schools.

Five per cent of the schools reported that they distributed reports and letters every three weeks. Of the other frequencies reported, less than five per cent of the schools indicated that they made use of any one practice.

Frequency of conferences. Table XI indicates how frequently parent-teacher and parent-counselor conferences were held in the 170 Iowa secondary schools which reported using them. Three of the frequencies reported showed an identical 34.6 per cent usage: end of first and third nine weeks, when requested by parent, and when requested by teacher or counselor. Another 8.8 per cent of the schools indicated that conferences were held in the fall and in the spring. None of the other frequencies was reported by as many as two per cent of the schools.

Released time allowed for parent-teacher conferences. Respondents were asked to report whether or not their schools allowed released time for parent-teacher conferences. The following data are based on the 162 schools which used

TABLE XI

FREQUENCY OF PARENT-TEACHER AND PARENT-COUNSELOR CONFERENCES
REPORTED BY 170 IOWA SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1964*

Frequency	Number	Per Cent
End of first and third nine weeks	59	34.6
When requested by parent	59	34.6
When requested by teacher or counselor	59	34.6
Fall and spring	15	8.8
After first nine week grades are out	3	1.8
Shortly after first semester	3	1.8
End of second six weeks	3	1.8
During second and third nine weeks	2	1.2
End of each semester	2	1.2
During freshman orientation	2	1.2
November and February	1	0.6
Second six weeks and fourth six weeks	1	0.6
End of twelve weeks	1	0.6
Seventh or eighth week of each semester	1	0.6
After five weeks of each semester	1	0.6
Fourteenth week of each semester	1	0.6
End of third quarter	1	0.6
During American Education Week	1	0.6
Second week of second semester	1	0.6
Fourth week of first six weeks	1	0.6
End of second semester	1	0.6
Throughout year	1	0.6
Spring	1	0.6
End of each quarter	1	0.6

*60 of the 230 reporting schools did not use parent-teacher or parent-counselor conferences.

parent-teacher conferences:

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Schools allowing released time	120	74.1
Schools <u>not</u> allowing released time	42	25.9

Table XII reveals the amount of released time set aside in the schools for parent-teacher conferences. Forty-seven and five-tenths per cent allowed 2 days, and 33.3 per cent allowed 1 day. The next most common amount of released time allowed was $1\frac{1}{2}$ days, reported by only 5 per cent of the schools.

TABLE XII

RELEASED TIME ALLOWED FOR PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES
REPORTED BY 120 IOWA SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1964*

Time allowed	Number	Per Cent
2 days	57	47.5
1 day	40	33.3
$1\frac{1}{2}$ days	6	5.0
Parts of 5 days	4	3.4
Parts of 8 days	3	2.6
Parts of 3 days	2	1.7
$\frac{1}{2}$ day	2	1.7
3 days	1	0.8
4 days	1	0.8
Part of 1 day	1	0.8
Parts of 2 days	1	0.8
Parts of 4 days	1	0.8
Parts of 6 days	1	0.8

*110 of the reporting schools did not allow released time for parent-teacher conferences.

Time of day designated for parent-teacher conferences.

Table XIII specifies the time of day assigned for parent-teacher conferences by the schools using this method to report progress. There were fifty-five and two-tenths per cent of the responding schools which indicated that parent-teacher

and parent-counselor conferences were held during school hours only. Three per cent of the schools indicated that they held parent-teacher and parent-counselor conferences part of the time after the evening meal and 1.5 per cent of the schools reported that this was the only time designated for these conferences.

TABLE XIII

TIMES DESIGNATED FOR PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES
REPORTED BY 162 IOWA SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1964*

Times	Number	Per Cent
During school hours only	111	55.2
During school hours part of the time	28	13.9
After school hours before evening meal part of the time	27	13.4
No specified time	18	9.0
After evening meal part of the time	6	3.0
After school hours before evening meal only	4	2.0
Before school hours part of the time	3	1.5
After evening meal only	3	1.5
Before school hours only	1	0.5

*68 of the reporting schools did not allow released time for parent-teacher conferences.

Purpose of parent-counselor and parent-teacher conferences. None of the schools which made use of parent-counselor or parent-teacher conferences indicated that these conferences replaced the report cards for reporting student progress. In addition to supplementing the report card, 16.1 per cent of the 162 schools which used conferences indicated that they used the parent-counselor and parent-teacher conferences for other reasons, as well. The following is a list of additional reasons as stated:

1. "Review recent interest, ability, or achievement test information."
2. "Discuss attitudes, behavior, and effort."
3. "Compare ability and achievement."
4. "Provides better understanding between teachers and parent good public relations."
5. "Better understanding of students and families."
6. "Affords better opportunity to become acquainted."
7. "Any other felt need for such a conference."
8. "Only in case of special problem in relation to a special student."
9. "To formulate school and parents into one working body for common ends."
10. "Discuss scheduling and explain school policies, procedures, and planning."
11. "Public relations."
12. "Freshmen 3-way conference for future planning."
13. "Gives teacher insight of students environment and problems."

14. "Seek parental cooperation to encourage student to improve scholastic achievement."
15. "To inform parents of unsatisfactory progress and try to work out a solution."
16. "Student report card given out at the time of the conference."
17. "Find out more information regarding the student's background, problems, needs, and goals."
18. "Resolves problematic situation; clarifies objectives and purposes."
19. "Must be considered public relations."
20. "Discuss I.T.E.D. results."
21. "Discussion of problems."
22. "Considers adjustment of pupil."
23. "Also for personal conferences relating to psychological problems, etc."
24. "Discuss standardized test results; general sharing of questions and answers."
25. "Keep parents informed."
26. "Designed to guide parents toward helping the student ease home conditions."

Rating of reporting practices used. Table XIV reveals the number and per cent of the 230 reporting schools using each of the reporting practices mentioned earlier in this chapter along with ratings by principals as to the value of these practices in achieving their school's objectives.

Fifty-nine and one-tenth per cent of the administrators rated the value of report cards as "good", whereas 22.2 per

cent rated their value as only "fair". Parent-teacher conferences were rated by 51.2 per cent of the respondents as "good" and by 37.1 per cent as "superior".

Failure warning slips, or F-slips, were rated "good" by 55.2 per cent of the principals and "fair" by 21.6 per cent. Fifty-eight and nine-tenths per cent of the respondents rated D-slips as "good" reporting practices, 17.7 per cent rated them "fair", and 14 per cent rated them "superior".

Parent-counselor conferences were rated "good" by 60.6 per cent of the principals and "superior" by 21.1 per cent.

Progress report letters were rated "good" by 52.2 per cent of the respondents, but only "fair" by 28.3 per cent. None of the administrators rated them "poor", however. Fifty-two and three-tenths per cent of the respondents rated progress report forms "good", 25 per cent rated them "fair", and 18.1 per cent rated them "superior".

Checklists were rated "good" by 39.3 per cent of the school administrators. Seventeen and eight-tenths per cent rated them "fair", and 14.3 per cent rated them "superior".

Forty-five and four-tenths per cent rated unsatisfactory work slips "good", whereas 36.4 per cent rated them "superior". Narrative reports were rated "good" by 70 per cent of the respondents, whereas 30 per cent rated them "superior".

Students self-evaluations along with telephone conversations were not rated by any of the respondents even though they were reported as used in a few of the schools.

TABLE XIV

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF 230 IOWA SECONDARY SCHOOLS USING VARIOUS TYPES OF PROGRESS REPORTING PRACTICES, INCLUDING RATINGS BY PRINCIPALS AS TO THEIR VALUE IN MEETING DESIRED OBJECTIVES, 1964*

Type of Practice	Total		Superior		Good		Fair		Poor		No Response	
	Num- ber	Per- Cent	Num- ber	Per- Cent	Num- ber	Per- Cent	Num- ber	Per- Cent	Num- ber	Per- Cent	Num- ber	Per- Cent
Report Cards	230	100.0	25	10.9	136	59.1	51	22.2	3	1.3	15	6.5
Parent-Teacher Conferences	162	74.3	60	37.1	83	51.2	12	7.4	1	.6	6	3.7
P Slips	116	50.4	16	13.8	64	55.2	25	21.5	3	2.6	8	6.9
D Slips	107	46.5	15	14.0	63	58.9	19	17.7	5	4.7	5	4.7
Parent-Counselor Conferences	71	30.9	15	21.1	43	60.6	2	2.8	1	1.4	10	14.1
Progress Report Letters	46	20.0	6	13.0	24	52.2	13	28.3	0	0	3	6.5
Progress Report Forms	44	19.1	8	18.1	23	52.3	11	25.0	1	2.3	1	2.3
Checklists	28	12.2	4	14.3	11	39.3	5	17.8	1	3.6	7	25.0
Unsatisfactory Worksheets	11	4.8	4	36.4	5	45.4	0	0	0	0	2	18.2
Narrative Reports	10	4.3	3	30.0	7	70.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Self-Evaluations	2	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100.0
Telephone Conversations	2	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100.0

*Percentages figured on the number of secondary units providing each service.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine what methods were being used in 1964 to report student progress in Iowa secondary schools, the percentage of schools using each method, and the frequency with which each method was used. To further enhance the value of the study, principals' opinions regarding the degree to which each reporting practice was meeting their school's objectives was incorporated into the study.

The research done in connection with this study was facilitated by the use of a questionnaire employed to survey 248 Iowa high school principals in the year 1964. The questionnaire used in the survey included the following areas: (1) types of methods used in reporting progress, (2) procedures used in distributing progress reports, (3) types of grading systems used in academic subjects, (4) factors evaluated and reported other than subject matter, (5) types of grading systems used in areas other than subject matter, (6) frequency of reporting progress, and (7) how nearly each reporting practice that is used meets the school's desired objectives. The questionnaire was sent to 248 high school principals in all sections of the state of Iowa; 230, or 92.7 per cent, were returned and the replies tabulated.

I. SUMMARY

It is evident that secondary schools in Iowa vary greatly in their use of reporting practices. The only very common reporting practice was report cards, which 100 per cent of the respondents' schools used. Almost three-fourths of the reporting schools, or 74.3 per cent, used parent-teacher conferences. Failure warning slips, or F-slips, were used in 50.4 per cent of the schools. The following reporting practices were used by less than fifty per cent of the schools participating in the study: D-slips, parent-counselor conferences, progress report letters, progress report forms, checklists, unsatisfactory work slips, narrative reports, self evaluations, and telephone conversations.

Fifty-eight and three-tenths per cent of the reporting schools indicated that the local school district or school staff designed their report cards. This compares with 52.2 per cent of the 209 schools that Martin reported in his 1947 study.¹

The current study indicated that two-thirds of the reporting schools had the teachers distribute report cards to students in all instances. This compares with 87.5 per cent who used this procedure in Martin's study.²

¹Martin, op. cit., 13.

²Martin, op. cit., 16.

There was widespread use of the A, B, C, D, F academic grading system with 86.5 per cent of the reporting schools using this system compared to the 93.8 per cent reported in the 1947 study.¹

In the current study, the most common factor included on report cards other than academic progress was attendance, which was reported by 85.2 per cent of the responding schools. Nearly one-third of the schools which evaluated progress in areas other than subject matter used a grading system of S, I, U. Almost another one-third used the A, B, C, D, F grading system.

Eighty and nine-tenths per cent of the schools in the current research indicated they distributed report cards at nine-week intervals. This compares with only 6.7 per cent of the reporting schools in the 1947 research study by Martin. Ninety-two and three-tenths per cent of the respondents in the 1947 study reported the use of six-week intervals for distribution of report cards.²

Almost three-fourths of the schools indicating they made use of either progress reports or progress letters reported that they included low grade reports on them.

Slightly over one-third of the schools indicated that they used parent-teacher or parent-counselor conferences at

¹Martin, op. cit., 17.

²Martin, op. cit., 14.

the end of the first and third nine weeks. An identical proportion also indicated that they held these conferences at the request of the parent or when they were requested by a teacher or counselor.

The most common allotment of released time allowed by the 120 schools making use of parent-teacher conferences was two days. Almost one-half of the schools allocated this amount of time. Slightly over one-half of the schools which held parent-teacher conferences held them only during school hours.

The most common rating given by principals when evaluating reporting practices in terms of meeting each school's desired objectives was "good" (on a scale ranging from "poor" to "superior"). Seventy per cent of the principals who evaluated narrative reports rated them as good practices. Slightly over one-half of the respondents rated the following as good practices: report cards, parent-teacher conferences, progress report letters, and progress report forms.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the findings of this study, which investigated the progress reporting practices used in Iowa secondary schools, the following conclusions are presented:

1. The most popular reporting practices were report cards and parent-teacher conferences.
2. The frequency most commonly used for distribution of report cards was once every nine weeks.
3. Deficiency slips were usually distributed midway between report card distribution periods.
4. Progress report forms and progress report letters were issued the majority of the time at midterm.
5. Parent-teacher conferences were held most frequently either at the end of the first and third nine weeks, when requested by the parent, or when requested by a teacher or counselor.
6. The most common rating given by principals when evaluating reporting practices in terms of meeting each school's objectives was "good" on a scale ranging from "poor" to "superior".

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Please place an X in front of the method or procedure of reporting to parents used at your school. If an expression of opinion is requested, place an X in the appropriate column. Space is provided for additional answers.

1. What methods of reporting do you use in your school?

<input type="checkbox"/> Checklists	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent-Teacher Conferences
<input type="checkbox"/> D Slips	<input type="checkbox"/> Progress Report Forms
<input type="checkbox"/> F Slips	<input type="checkbox"/> Progress Report Letters
<input type="checkbox"/> Narrative Reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Report Cards
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent-Counselor Conferences	<input type="checkbox"/> Self Evaluation

OTHER METHODS USED: _____

2. What type of report card is used?

☐ Company designed
☐ Specially designed by the local school district or school staff

3. What method is used in distributing report cards?

☐ Distributed personally to the student
☐ Distributed personally to the parent by a teacher
☐ Distributed personally to the parent by a counselor
☐ Distributed by mail to the parent

OTHER MEANS OF DISTRIBUTION: _____

4. What type of grading system do your teachers use to indicate academic progress on report cards?

<input type="checkbox"/> A, B, C, D, E	<input type="checkbox"/> 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<input type="checkbox"/> A, B, C, D, F	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage scores
<input type="checkbox"/> A, B, C, D, U	

OTHER TYPE OF GRADING SYSTEM USED: _____

5. Do the teachers indicate on the report cards the number of students receiving each grade or score?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. What factors other than subject matter progress are evaluated on report cards by your teachers?

<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> Effort
<input type="checkbox"/> Attitude	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiative
<input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/> Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation	

OTHER FACTORS COVERED ON REPORT CARDS: _____

7. What type of grading system do you use to indicate progress in factors other than subject matter on report cards?

<input type="checkbox"/> A, B, C, D, E	<input type="checkbox"/> 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<input type="checkbox"/> A, B, C, D, F	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage scores
<input type="checkbox"/> S. I. U. (Satisfactory, Improving, Unsatisfactory)	

OTHER TYPE OF GRADING SYSTEM: _____

8. Which of the following applies to "comments" on your report cards?

<input type="checkbox"/> Space is provided for <u>teacher</u> comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Space is provided for <u>parent</u> comments
<input type="checkbox"/> No space is provided for teacher or parent comments

OTHER METHOD USED: _____

9. How often are report cards distributed?

<input type="checkbox"/> Every six weeks	<input type="checkbox"/> Every nine weeks
--	---

OTHER INTERVAL OF TIME BETWEEN DISTRIBUTIONS: _____

10. If D, or F, or unsatisfactory slips are used, when are they distributed?

<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly
<input type="checkbox"/> Midway between the time report cards are distributed
<input type="checkbox"/> Whenever needed

OTHER INTERVAL USED BETWEEN DISTRIBUTION OF SLIPS _____

11. If progress report forms or progress report letters are sent to parents, what type of information is included in them?

<input type="checkbox"/> All grade reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiative
<input type="checkbox"/> Attitude	<input type="checkbox"/> Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation	<input type="checkbox"/> Low grade reports
<input type="checkbox"/> Dependability	<input type="checkbox"/> Resourcefulness
<input type="checkbox"/> Effort	

OTHER FACTORS COVERED IN PROGRESS REPORT FORMS OR LETTERS: _____

12. If used, when are progress report letters or forms sent out? _____

13. If parent-teacher or parent-counselor conference progress reporting is used, how often are these meetings scheduled?
 _____ Once a semester (When? _____)
 _____ Once a year (When? _____)
 _____ When requested by the teacher or counselor
 _____ When requested by the parent
 OTHER PROCEDURE USED: _____
14. If parent-teacher conferences are held to report student progress, is released time allowed away from teaching duties?
 _____ Yes _____ No
15. If released time is allowed for parent-teacher conferences for the purpose of reporting progress, how much released time is allowed per year?
 _____ 1 day _____ 1½ days _____ 2 days
 AMOUNT OF TIME IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE: _____
16. If parent-teacher conferences are held, when and how much time is allowed during the school year for these conferences?
 _____ Full day at a time
 IF A FULL DAY, HOW MANY FULL DAYS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR?
 _____ Half day at a time
 IF A HALF DAY, HOW MANY HALF DAYS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR?
 _____ Before School Hours
 _____ During School Hours
 _____ After School Hours Before Evening Meal
 _____ After Evening Meal
17. If parent-teacher or parent-counselor conferences are used, what is the purpose of these conferences?
 _____ Replaces the report card for reporting student progress
 _____ Supplements the report card for reporting student progress
 PURPOSE OR PURPOSES IF OTHER THAN ABOVE: _____

18. Of the reporting practices used at your school, how would you rate each of them in terms of meeting your school's desired objectives?

	Superior	Good	Fair	Poor
Checklists	_____	_____	_____	_____
D Slips	_____	_____	_____	_____
F Slips	_____	_____	_____	_____
Narrative Reports	_____	_____	_____	_____
Parent-Counselor Conferences	_____	_____	_____	_____
Parent-Teacher Conferences	_____	_____	_____	_____
Progress Report Forms	_____	_____	_____	_____
Progress Report Letters	_____	_____	_____	_____
Report Cards	_____	_____	_____	_____
Self Evaluation	_____	_____	_____	_____
LIST OTHERS BELOW:				
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B
Letter to Principal

April 11, 1964

As a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree at Drake University, I am conducting a survey to find out what procedures are being used in reporting student progress to parents in Iowa high schools.

It is hoped that through the means of this survey, administrators and others will be able to obtain up-to-date information concerning reporting procedures that will prove helpful in determining whether or not revisions should be made in their own school's reporting procedures.

It is vital that a good response be obtained by those to whom the questionnaire is sent. I would appreciate your filling in the responses as soon as possible and returning the questionnaire in the prepaid self-addressed envelope. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Floyd Sanders

APPENDIX C

Follow-Up Letter to Principal

May 5, 1964

Over three weeks ago a questionnaire was sent to you along with a letter requesting that the form be filled out and returned to me.

As yet, I have not received your completed questionnaire. I would appreciate very much your filling out the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Floyd Sanders